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PRACTICAL *42409 de 49*
INSTRUCTIONS

On the Obligation and Manner of keeping

L E N T.

To which is prefixed,

A Preliminary Dissertation

O N

FASTING and ABSTINENCE,

A Brief EXPLICATION of the

GOSPELS of LENT,

WITH AN

Appendix *on the Adoration of the Cross.*

By a P^{rice}—st of the D—rs of K^{ilmore}—e.

D U B L I N:

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SACRAMENTS,

To prepare Children for the first Communion.

By J-- B-----, Priest of the Diocess of K--loe.



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A Preliminary DISSERTATION on  
*Fasting and Abstinence.*

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*The INTRODUCTION.*

**F**ASTING in general comes to us so strongly enforced by the divine Precept; so undeniably recommended by the Doctrine and Example of our heavenly Teacher, whose public Ministry was preceded by a Fast of forty Days and forty Nights, as it is related in St. *Matt.* 4, &c. and whose Disciples, formed at the School of so divine and holy a Master, preached the Necessity of it to all the Nations, they brought over to the Christian Faith; that it is astonishing any Denomination of Christians would presume to traduce or misrepresent so ancient and so salutary an Institution. Abstinence from certain Meats, from a Supposition only of their being more nutritive, and consequently more opposite to the original Intent of Fasting, which is to reduce the stubborn Flesh, and to bring it under proper Subjection to the Spirit, as well as to expiate its past criminal Excesses by the Self-denials and Mortifications so often recommended by our divine Legislator, is also coeval with Christianity, and at least of Apostolic, if not of divine Institution. Both these Articles of Discipline have been nevertheless violently impugned, and strangely mistated, by the Sen-

sualists of different Ages; but by none more  
 confidently, or if I may say it without Of-  
 fence, more daringly, than by the Authors  
 of the late Reformation: Conscious that to  
 alleviate, if not entirely to take off the Hard-  
 ships laid on our corrupt Nature by the Lord,  
 and his Disciples, and to point out an easier  
 Road to Salvation, would be to the Lovers  
 of the World a most powerful Allurement,  
 to embrace a Mode of Worship that promised  
 Heaven, without Works of Penance or Mor-  
 tification, they artfully laid this Bait, to gain  
 Credit to their other Innovations. To rescue  
 the Spouse of *Christ*, the *Catholic Church*,  
 from the Aspersions cast on her by these pre-  
 tended Reformers of her Doctrine and Disci-  
 pline, and to wipe off the deforming Tinc-  
 ture of Tyranny and Superstition, unfairly  
 laid on her most salutary Injunctions of Fast-  
 ing and Abstinence, is the sole Design of the  
 Author of this Dissertation, and of the In-  
 structions annexed to it. As his Intention is  
 not, nor ever will be, to give the least Offence  
 to those, who now profess these new Doc-  
 trines, in whom, very few excepted, he ad-  
 mires a Spirit of Moderation, little observed  
 by the first Authors of the Schism; but to  
 vindicate the Doctrine and Discipline of the  
 Church he belongs to from foul and odious  
 Imputations, and to instruct its Members in  
 the Duties of their Profession; he hopes his  
 Essay will not be disapproved by the Candid  
 and Unprejudiced.



THE  
DISSERTATION.

UNDOUBTED Monuments of ecclesiastical Antiquity prove that Abstinence from certain Meats on all Fast-Days, was the established Discipline of them remote Ages; nor did the primitive Christians know the Distinction now made between the one and the other: All their Days of Fast were Days of Abstinence, and their Abstinence then was more extensive, than ours is now. St. Innocent, Pope, (Anno 440) makes no Distinction between the Fast and Abstinence of *Fridays* and *Saturdays*, practiced in his Time. *We do not deny*, says he, *that the Fast should be observed on Friday, but we say it should be also kept on Saturday.* Innoc. 1. Ep. 1. And St. Augustine, Ep. 36, (Anno 412) informs us, *Wednesday* was also kept in many Churches, because on that Day the *Jews* had formed the Design, or rather the final Resolution of putting *Jesus* to Death, and had on the Night of that Day covenanted with *Judas* to betray him into their Hands. The Council of *Agde*, in *France*, held (An. 506), and the 4th Council of *Orleans*, prescribe the Fast of *Saturdays*. St. Augustine, Epist. 86, says, that having consulted St. Ambrose, in whose Church the Fast of *Wednesdays* was observed, but not of *Saturdays*, he was told by this holy Prelate, that when he was at *Milan* he did not fast on *Saturdays*; and that when he was at *Rome*, he did fast on *Saturdays*. *Quando hic sum non jejuno Sabbato, quando Romæ sum jejuno Sabbato.* The 66th Canon of those attributed to the Apostles forbids to fast on *Saturdays*, except the *Saturday* before *Easter-Day*. And some

particular Councils of the *Greek Church* renewed the same Prohibition. The Reason of this Discipline of the *Eastern Church* was, because in the very Days of the Apostles certain Heretics, *Simon the Magician*, and his Disciples *Menander*, *Basilides*, *Saturninus*, *Cerintbus*, *Capocrates*, &c. taught that the God of the *Hebrews*, and the Author of the Old Testament, as they called him, was an evil Principle, and the Source of all Evil ; and as that Day was devoted to his Worship in the *Jewish* Economy, they kept it a Fast in despite of his Ordinance. The *Eastern Church*, the better to detect these foolish Heretics, prohibited her Faithful to fast on that Day. And this Discipline the *Greek Church* follows to this Day ; but fasts *Wednesdays* as we do *Saturdays*. But as this Heresy, which became afterwards that of the *Manicheans*, did not in their early Ages infect the *Western Church* ; the Fast of *Saturdays* was always practiced in the *Latin Church*, except in that of *Milan* alone. See *Cabass. Not. Conc. ad Conc. Laodic. S. Innoc. I. Pope, Epist. ad Dec. Ep. Eug.* shews the Inconsistency of this Discipline of the *Greek Church* : For, says he, they fast the *Saturday* before *Easter-Day*, in Memory of Christ's Burial, whose glorious Resurrection they celebrate next Day. And since every *Sunday* is consecrated to the Memory of this joyful Mystery ; why should not every *Saturday*, as well as that particular one, be observed as a Fast for the same Reason ?

Pope Gregory VII. (Anno 1064), perceiving that the Abstinence of *Saturdays* was going into disuse, in 1078, renewed the ancient Discipline, and strictly enjoined, *That whoever professes to be a Member of the Christian Church, should abstain from Flesh on Saturdays.* As the ancient Custom was in some Churches to abstain *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, in others *Fridays* and *Saturdays* ; in a few, all the  
three

three Days, Pope *Innoc. III.* (Anno 1220) consulted upon the Liberty some Christians took to eat Flesh on *Saturdays*, made answer, *That each Bishop should support the Discipline of his Church.*

In some national Churches, that of *France*, for Example, it was an ancient Discipline of some Diocesses to be allowed the Use of Flesh on the *Saturdays*, from the Nativity of our Lord to the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. This Privilege, or Toleration rather, was approved in the synodical Ordinances of *Stephen Poncher*, Bishop of *Paris*, in 1500. *Eustach. du Belay* mentions it, in 1557. And a Council of *Chartres* held in 1526, gives it an additional Sanction. *St. Antoninus*, who wrote about the Year 1459, affirms it to be a mortal Sin to eat Flesh on *Saturdays*, except, says he, where it is the national Custom, as in *France*, on some privileged *Saturdays*. Now the Exception of some is a Confirmation of the general Rule, according to this Axiom of the Law: *Exceptio Confirmat. regulam.*

The Church of *England* in the Beginning of its Reformation, (Anno 1548) well convinced of the Antiquity and Lawfulness of this Discipline, enforced the Observance of it. The Liturgy published by *Edward VI.* as supreme Head of that Church, prohibited the Use of Flesh on *Fridays* and *Saturdays*; and by Act of Parliament passed in 1548, the second of said *Edward*, it was enacted, that Abstinence should be observed in *Lent*, on the *Quatuor Tempora* Days, or *Ember-Week*, and on all other usual Days of Abstinence, unless Dispensation was obtained from the King, as supreme Head of ecclesiastical Discipline: A Power which the Popes, great Tyrants as they are represented by Protestant Writers, never withheld from the Bishops of the Catholic World. Now, though the Liturgy was afterwards amended in the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*,  
the

the female Pope of *England*, this Discipline was not rescinded, nor was this Act of Parliament ever reversed by any subsequent Act. Wherefore, it is a Law both of the State and of the Church of *England* to abstain from Flesh, as Catholics do.

Are not these, undeniable Proofs of the Antiquity of this Institution? And since, by St. *Augustine's* Rule, it is both reasonable and just to hold as of apostolic Institution, any Article of Church Discipline, whose Origin cannot be fixed, is not this Institution referable to the Apostles themselves as its first Authors? The 68th Canon of those attributed to the Apostles, make formal Mention of the Fast of *Lent*; and orders *the Bishop, or Priest, or, &c. who do not observe it, to be deposed; and the Layman to be excluded from the Communion of the Church, that is, to be excommunicated.*

Though Fasting in general be of divine Institution, and strongly recommended in the old and new Testament, yet the Mode and Manner of it, as well as the Time and Days, were left to be determined by the Prudence and Discretion of the Church; who has from her Institution, exercised this Authority delegated to her, by her heavenly Spouse. And this accounts for that Want of Uniformity we find in the ecclesiastical History, in the Manner that the different national Churches observed the Fast and Abstinence, some with more, others with less Severity. In some Churches the Use of Fish and Flesh were forbidden, and are still so in the *Greek Church*: In others Milk or Butter even were not allowed on Fast-Days, nor are they even now in the particular Diocess of the Church of *Rome*, more tenacious of ancient Customs, than any other Church. That Milk and Butter were not allowed during all *Lent* in the Church of *France*, we may infer from the Custom in many Diocesses, of the Parishes going in Procession to the Cathedral on

*Quinqua-*

*Quinquagesima-Sunday*, to demand this Leave of the Bishops. *Pro indulgentia vescendi lacte & butyro, tempore quadragesimali.* And at *Roan*, the Tower in which the great Bell is hung, is still called the Butter-Tower, from its being built by the Inhabitants, for getting Leave to eat Butter in *Lent*.

In *Germany* the Fast was not so severe. For Abstinence from Eggs, Milk, Butter and Cheese was voluntary there, as *Eneas*, Bishop of *Paris*, relates in his Defence of the *Latin Church* against the Reproaches of the *Greek*, in the 9th Century, when their Schism was forming. Nor in *England*, we may infer from venerable *Bede* in his ecclesiastical History, where he relates of a holy Bishop, that he eat nothing all *Lent*, but an Egg and a little Milk mixed with Water, and a Bit of Bread, every Evening. *Permodicum panis cum uno ovo, & parvo lacte aqua permixto ad vesperam percipiebat.* Lib. 3. As in the primitive Church no Distinction was made between Fast and Abstinence, the Custom of abstaining from Flesh the *Sundays* in *Lent* was not introduced until that Distinction began. In the Life of *Godfry*, Bishop of *Amiens* in *France*, we read what Pains that holy Prelate took in the 12th Century to enforce this Abstinence, that began already to be observed in *Italy*, *Germany*, and *France*. The Catholic Church left always the national Churches to their ancient Customs; and the last general Council, treading on these Steps of venerable Antiquity, has laid no particular Injunction in regard to the Fast, but that every Church should observe it, as it used to do.

*Quatuor Tempora Fasti.*

THE Fast of *Quatuor Tempora*, or *Ember-Week*, so called, because on those Days the Faithful used to eat nothing but Bread baked under the Embers, *St. Leo the Great* (*Ser. 92 de Jejun.*

10 *Mensis*) holds to be of apostolic Institution. St. *Calistus*, Pope and Martyr, early in the second Century, ordered the Observance of these Fasts of the four Seasons, as of apostolical Institution.

### VIGILS.

THE Observance of *Vigils* is also of immemorial Date in the Catholic Church. Many of the ancient Fathers, and particularly St. *Augustine* mention them, as Days of Prayer and Penance. (*See S. Clem. Lib. 5. Const. Apost. Cap. 19. Tert. lib. 2d. ad uxorem. Euseb. Lib. 7. Hist. Eccl. Cap. 70. &c.*) The very Name, derived from the Latin Word *Vigiliae*, shews they were observed with great Devotion, and that the Faithful used to pass the Night in Prayer on the Tombs of the Martyrs; and the Name of Feast given to the next Day, intimates that the Day before was a Fast. We have still a Remnant of that ancient Discipline in the Observance of *Christmas-Eve* in Catholic Countries, on which the Faithful assemble in the Churches, to sing Mattins, and after twelve o'Clock to hear Midnight Mass.

### ROGATIONS.

THE Abstinence of the *Rogation* Days, which at first was also a Fast, began in *France* early in the fifth Century. St. *Mamertus*, Bishop of *Vienna* in *Dauphiny*, first introduced them, to avert the Wrath of God from that City, afflicted with many Calamities of Earthquakes, Conflagrations, &c. which consumed his own Residence on *Easter-Night*, (Anno 469). The other Bishops of *France* soon adopted this holy Institution. St. *Avitus* of *Vienna*, and St. *Cæsarius* of *Arles*, inform us, that this Devotion was already observed every where. The Council of *Agde*, held (Anno 506), at which St. *Cæsarius* of *Arles* presided, mentions them; and the first Council of *Orleans*, (Anno 511) made a De-

a Decree of their Observance. *Placuit rogationes, cum triduo jejunio, ab omnibus Ecclesiis observari.* Many other provincial Councils adopted this Decree, as that of *Tours* in 566, &c.

The Litanies, sung at the Procession on those Days, are called *Litaniæ Minores*, to distinguish them from the Litanies of *St. Mark's Day*, that were already instituted at *Rome*, and were called *Litaniæ Majores*. It is observable, according to an ancient Author, that the *Greek Etymology* of Litany has the same Sense as the Latin *Rogatio*. Pope *Leo 3d*, who was exalted to the sovereign Pontificate in 795, first received the Rogations in *Rome*: But not till *Charlemain* agreed to receive the Litany of *St. Mark* in *France*.

The Council of *Cologne*, held in 1536, gives as a Reason for these public Supplications with the Fast accompanying them, (now an Abstinence only) that the Fruits of the Earth being yet in great Danger of being blasted by the Inclemency of the Season, these public Prayers are ordered, to avert God's Indignation, and to draw down his Benedictions on them. We read of Emperors and crowned Heads, who assisted bare-footed at the Processions made on those Days. *Vide M. Grançola's Commentaire historique sur le Breviaire Romain.*

Protestant Writers, who turn those pious Observances of the Catholic Church into Ridicule, would do well to reflect they asperse venerable Antiquity, even that of the earliest Ages, by their Invectives. Those Institutions are not Novel, nor introduced in the dark Ages, as they call them, of Monkish Ignorance and Superstition, (Ages that they alone find out, and that we are utter Strangers to.) No, but in the pure and enlightened Ages, they confess to be orthodox and uncorrupted.

Though the Scriptural Texts they object to our Fasts and Abstinenances were often explained in their  
true

true and natural Sense by our controversial Writers, and particularly by Mr. *Andrew Donlevy*, in his *Irish and English Catechism*, printed at *Paris*, in the Year 1742. As many of our Catholics are little conversant with these Writers, and are often puzzled with these Objections, they know not the Solution of, I will now briefly explain the principal Texts opposed against us; having previously observed that surely they do not pretend to understand them better than Antiquity that is undeniably on our Side.

When the Apostle St. *Paul* says, that the Distinction of Meats is the Doctrine of Devils, he meant it in the Sense of *Marcion* and *Tatian*, the Authors of the *Manichean* Heresy, who taught that certain Meats were created by the Principle of Evil, and therefore bad in themselves: As we read in St. *Jerom.* (*Lib. 2<sup>o</sup>. Adv. Jovin.*) and in *Tertulian*. Catholics hold no such wicked Doctrine: They know the Meats they abstain from on certain Days, were created by God, and good in themselves: They eat them with Thanksgiving the Days before and after: And they only abstain from them on prohibited Days, from a Spirit of Mortification and Submission to the Church. If this was a *Doctrine of Devils*, St. *John Baptist* would be impeachable, who drank neither Wine nor strong Drink, and who lived upon Locusts and wild Honey. St. *Matt.* 3. 5. St. *Luke* 1. 15. The Apostles would have taught the Doctrine of Devils, when they commanded the Faithful to abstain from Meats offered to Idols, from Blood and strangled Meats: And that by the special Impulse of the Holy Ghost. Acts 15. 28. St. *Paul* himself could not be exempted from this Guilt, when he says, *If his eating Meat would scandalize his Brother, he never would eat it.* 1. Cor. 8.

But

But the Apostle orders the *Corinthians*, to eat every Thing that is sold at the Market, and to ask no Question for Conscience Sake. (1 Cor. 10.) He does, no doubt: But it was to obviate the Scruples of some, who least the Meat they bought had been offered to Idols, would fear to use it, until they enquired if it was. The Apostle disapproves this too scrupulous Enquiry, and bids them buy it indistinctly: Still if any one told them it was offered to Idols, he bids them not eat it, for Conscience Sake. Ibid.

When he says in his Epistle to the *Colossians*, Let no Man judge you in Meat or in Drink, &c. (Coll. 2 16.) The Words immediately following, *New Moon and Sabbath*, indicate evidently that he speaks of the *Jewish* Observances, that were then quite abolished, except what the Apostles had enjoined in the Council of *Jerusalem*: To abstain from Blood and strangled Meats. (Acts 15. 19.) His Meaning then is, that he would not have any one condemn the new converted Christians for not keeping these legal Observances, as it is evident from other Places of holy Writ, some of the converted *Jews* did, who still believed themselves bound to observe them, and condemn those that did not.

It is a manifest Abuse of the Word of God thus to object the Texts of holy Scripture, wresting them from the Sense and Meaning the Holy Ghost intended, to mislead the Ignorant, who are easily caught with the Sound. What Reference, for Example, have these Words of our Saviour, *What entereth into the Mouth defileth not a Man*. (St. Matt. 15. 11.) What Reference have they to Fasting? It is plain they were spoke against the *Pharisees*, a Set of carping Hypocrites, who judged a Man unclean, if he eat without washing his Hands, his Dishes, and his Cups, as they did themselves, though they were inwardly full of Uncleannefs and Iniquity. Yet those Words are triumphantly ob-

jected to us by the Enemies of Fasts; but indeed to very little Purpose. For, though our Saviour spoke these Words, will any one deny, that eating *Blood or strangled Meat*, would have defiled the primitive Christians? Or that eating the forbidden Fruit had defiled *Adam's Soul*, or that Excess of Drink would not even now defile the Soul of a Drunkard?

From all which we may conclude, that the Law of God and his Church, the old and new Testament, the Practice of the Saints, and of the good Christians of all Ages, nay the very Liturgy and Common Prayer-book of the modern Church of *England*, will all rise in Judgment against these unhappy Christians of our Days, *whose God is their Belly, and whose End is Perdition*. Phil. 3. 19.

The holy Fathers are very diffuse on the great Advantage and Utility of this Institution. Whoever reads the eloquent Homilies of St. *Cbrysoftom*, the Sermons of St. *Augustine*, the Discourse of St. *Basil*, the Treatise of St. *Ambrose*, wrote expressly on this Subject, cannot but lament the Decay it has fallen into in these spurious Ages of Irreligion and Ungodliness. St. *Cbrysoftom* says, *Fast is the Food of the Soul, and gives it Pinions to soar aloft, and contemplate the Divinity*. (Hom. 1<sup>a</sup>. in Gen.) *We fall into Disorder by Sin*, says St. *Basil*, *and we are healed by Repentance*. But *Repentance without Fast is vain and fruitless*, says he. (Orat. 1<sup>a</sup>. de jejun.) *Fast*, says St. *Ambrose*, *is the Death of Sin, the overthrow of Vice, the Remedy of Salvation, and the Sacrifice of Reconciliation*. (Lib. de jej. Cap. 3<sup>o</sup>.) St. *Leo the Great* treats this Subject eloquently in his Sermons on the Fast of the seventh Month, and the Church comprizes in a few Words the Advantages of corporal Fasts, in her Preface for *Lent*: *They repress Vice, exalt the Mind, procure Virtue and Rewards: Qui Corporali jejunio vitia Comprimis, mentem elevas,*  
virtutem

*virtutem largiris & præmia.* How doleful, that so wholesome a Discipline, and so conducive to the Perfection and Salvation of the Soul, should have fallen into such Disrepute among the very Children of the Faith.

## APPENDIX on the MORAL of the GOSPELS of LENT.

**A**SH Wednesday. (Gosp. Matt. vi. 16, 22.) *Jesus Christ* condemns the Hypocrisy of those who fast through Ostentation; and who place their Affection in the Enjoyment of earthly Things; as St. *Augustine* explains in the Homily.

*Thursday.* (Matt. viii. 5, 13.) The *Centurion* expresses his Confidence in *Jesus Christ*, and his Humility in declaring himself unworthy to receive the Lord into his House. St. *Augustine* in the Homily observes it is of no Benefit to receive the Lord *Jesus* in the Body, if he be not received in the Heart.

*Friday.* (Matt. v. 43, to vi. 4.) The Gospel teaches the Necessity of pardoning Injuries, of loving our Enemies, and of returning good for Evil. St. *Jerom*, in the Homily says, the Precepts of the Lord are sometimes hard, but never impossible. He Instances the Example of St. *Stephen*, and of *Christ* himself, who prayed for their very Murderers.

*Saturday.* (Marc. vi. 47, 56.) *Peter's* Barge tossed by contrary Winds, represents, says venerable *Bede* in the Homily, the Troubles and Persecutions that the Church of *Christ* has to encounter here below. But he sits at the Helm to steer and protect it, through all Dangers and Assaults.

*First Sunday.* (Matt. iv. 1, 12.) The Gospel relates our Saviour's Retreat to the Desert; his Fast of forty Days and forty Nights, and his Temptations from Satan. St. *Gregory* teaches in

the Homily that these two means, Flight and Fast, will render us victorious over the Assaults of the Enemy, inevitable in this Life.

*Monday* of the first Week. (Matt. xxv. 31, 46.) The Gospel opens the Scene of the general Judgment, and delivers the Sentence of the Elect and Reproved. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, explains the Words *eternal Fire* of the Eternity of the Pains of the Damned; whose Torments will be as durable as the Fire that burns them.

*Tuesday* of the same. (Matt. xxi. 10, 17.) The Gospel shews the Respect due to the House of God, and the Enormity of profaning it by undue Comportment in it: That it is a House of Prayer, and should not be made a Den of Robbers. Venerable *Bede* in the Homily applies it to the Simony of those, who make a scandalous Traffick of holy Things: And to those also who indulge themselves in idle Thoughts and Conversations in the House of God.

*Wednesday* of the same. (Matt. xii. 38, 50.) *Jesus Christ* introduces the Examples of *Jonas* three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly; and of the Queen of the South, who came from far to admire *Solomon's* Wisdom. St. *Ambrose* in the Homily gives *Jonas's* Deliverance as a Figure of *Christ's* Resurrection.

*Thursday* of the same. (Matt. xv. 21, 28.) The Gospel gives the History of the *Cananean* Woman, who by her Importunity, her Humility, and Perseverance after various Repulses, obtained the Cure of her Daughter. St. *Mark* calls her a Syrophenician. St. *Jerom*, in the Homily gives her as a Model of the Earnestness, Humility, and Perseverance of a Christian's Prayer.

*Friday* of the same. (John v. 1, 15.) The Gospel relates the miraculous Cure of the Paralytic, who laboured thirty-eight Years under his Infirmary; and his Endeavours to get into the probatic Pond,

Pond, in which there was annually a miraculous Cure performed, when an Angel stirred the Water. St. *Ambrose* in the Homily, not the one read that Day, which is from St. *Augustine*, gives it as a Figure of the Waters of Baptism, others of the mysterious Pond of Penance.

*Saturday* and the *Sunday* after, the second in *Lent*, have the same Gospel. (Matt. xvii. 1, 9.) The Transfiguration of *Jesus Christ*. The Homily from St. *Leo* the Great, says, it was intended to confirm our Faith of the Divinity of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

*Monday* of the second Week. (John viii. 21, 29.) The Gospel is a Menace to the incredulous *Jews*, to be abandoned and suffered to die in their Sins. St. *Augustine* in the Homily applies it to the impenitent Sinner, whom he therefore exhorts to a speedy Conversion, to escape the Menace.

*Tuesday* of the same. (Matt. xxiii. 1, 12.) Our Lord in the Gospel orders the *Pharisees*, when they sit in the Chair of *Moses*, to be heard and regarded. So should also, says St. *Jerom*, in the Homily, the Ministers of *Christ*, when they speak in his Name, though their Lives should not correspond to their Doctrine.

*Wednesday* of the same. (Matt. xx. 17, 28.) The Lord disapproves the ambitious Demand of the Mother of the Sons of *Zebedee* in their Favour. St. *Jerom*, not in the Homily, which is from St. *Ambrose*, applies it to those, who pretend to get Heaven without Labour or Suffering, and shews they know not what they ask.

*Thursday* of the same. (Luc. xvi. 19, 31.) Gives the Gospel of the rich Glutton. Some Interpreters think it is but a meer Parable; others hold it to be a real History. St. *Gregory* in the Homily, makes a beautiful Allusion of it to the Rich of the World, who make bad Use of their Wealth; and takes Occasion to shew the Happiness of the Poor,

who bear their Affliction patiently, like *Lazarus*.

*Friday* of the same. (Matt. xxi. 33, 46.) Introduces the Parable of the Father of the Family who planted a Vine, &c. *St. Ambrose* in the Homily, says, this Vine is the House of *Israel*, or the Synagogue, which having ill-treated the Son, the Vine was transferred to other Husbandmen, viz. the *Gentiles*. The Allusion is natural, and gives the true Meaning of *Jesus Christ*.

*Saturday* of the same. (Luc. xv. 11, 32.) Gives the Gospel of the Prodigal Son. *St. Ambrose* in the Homily, explains it of the Sinner's Removal from God by Sin, and his Return by Repentance.

*Sunday* of the third Week. (Luc. xi. 14, 28.) We read the Gospel of the dumb and deaf Devil, and of the Man into whom the Devil, expelled before, re-enters with a Reinforcement of seven more. The first Part is applicable to the obstinate Sinner, whom the Devil holds fast in his Chains: The second to the relapsing Sinner, who, returning to the Vomit of Sin, gives the Devil Possession of his Soul again; and *whose last State becomes worse than his Former*.

*Monday* of the third Week. (Luc. iv. 23, 30.) *Jesus Christ* accounts for his working few Miracles in his own Country: Because, as *St. Ambrose* explains it in the Homily, Persons of distinguished Merit are often better received among Strangers, than among their own: For *no one is a Propbet in his own Country*, says the Lord. The miraculous Cure of *Naaman* the Syrian, is explained by him of the Cleansing by Baptism.

*Tuesday* of the same. (Matt. xviii. 15, 22.) The Gospel shews the Method of fraternal Correction, and how one Christian is to admonish another in Fault. *St. Augustine's* Homily on it is really beautiful: He shews with what Spirit and Intention of brotherly Love it is to be done. If you do it for  
your

your own Sake, says he, you do nothing; *Si amore tui facis, nihil facis.* (Serm. 16. de verbis Dom.)

*Wednesday* of the same. (Matt. xv. 1, 20.) The Gospel exposes the superstitious Traditions of the *Jews*, who often, through a too rigorous Observance of them, transgressed the more essential Precepts of the Law: As St. *Jerom* explains in the Homily; because it is by far more important, to rule the Heart and its irregular Appetites, than to be too scrupulous about exterior Observances, and accidental Formalities.

*Thursday* of the same. (Luke iv. 38, 44.) The Gospel relates the miraculous Cure of *Peter's* Mother-in-law. St. *Ambrose* in the Homily compares her Fever to the Fevers of our different Passions: Our Pride is a Fever, our Avarice a Fever, &c.

*Friday* of the same. (John iv. 5, 42.) The Gospel relates at large *Christ's* Conversation with the *Samaritan* Woman, her Conversion, with that of many more of the City. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, explains the Water *Christ* promises her of the Operations of Grace on the Soul, the true *Water that springs to Life Everlasting*. The Whole is a beautiful Description of the various Impulses of Grace to reclaim and convert the Sinner.

*Saturday* of the same. (John viii. 1, 11.) The Gospel relates the History of the Woman caught in Adultery, brought by the *Pharisees* before *Jesus*, and discharged by him with an Admonition of sinning no more. St. *Augustine* in the Homily proposes *Christ's* Meekness to her, as a Model to all Pastors of Souls, how to treat Sinners, who shew any Marks of Confusion, or Sorrow.

*Sunday* of the fourth Week. (John vi. 1, 15.) The Gospel speaks of the miraculous Multiplication of the Breads in the Desert, to feed a hungry Multitude, who followed *Jesus Christ*, regardless of their corporal Wants. St. *Augustine*  
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in the Homily thinks it less miraculous, than what the Lord does every Day for the Conservation of the World; but from being ordinary, it strikes not our Attention.

*Monday* of the fourth Week. (John ii. 13, 25.) The Gospel relates *Christ's* Severity a second Time towards those who trafficked in the Temple. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, says, he will inflict more rigorous Chastisements on those, who profane and defile their Souls with Sin, which are the living Temples of the Holy Ghost.

*Tuesday* of the same. (John vii. 14, 31.) In the Gospel the Lord proves the Truth of his Doctrine from the Miracles he wrought; and declares the Doctrine he taught was not his own, but his who sent him, his Father's. St. *Augustine* in the Homily exhorts all People to believe *Christ's* Doctrine, and to live conformable to their Belief.

*Wednesday* of the same. (John ix. 1, 38.) The Gospel relates very circumstantially the miraculous Cure of the Man born blind, and the Quibbles and Equivocations of the Scribes and Pharisees, to discredit the Miracle. St. *Augustine* in the Homily applies it to the Light of Faith the Soul receives in Baptism.

*Thursday* of the same. (Luke vii. 11, 16.) The Gospel relates the Resurrection of the Widow's Son from *Naim*. St. *Ambrose* in the Homily, says, that as *Jesus Christ* in Compassion to the disconsolate Mother of this Youth, restored him to her Tears: It is also at the Tears and Intercession of the Church, he restores her Children, dead in Sin, to the Life of Grace.

*Friday* of the same. (John xii. 1, 45.) The Gospel relates the Resurrection of *Lazarus*. St. *Augustine* in the Homily gives *Lazarus* dead and fettered in the Tomb, as a Figure of the deplorable Condition of a Soul in mortal Sin; and every

every Step *Christ* took to raise him to Life, as the living Expression of the Workings of Grace, to convert and raise her.

*Saturday* of the same. (John viii. 12, 20.) *Jesus Christ* declares in the Gospel he is the Light of the World, and that whoever followeth him, walketh not in Darkness. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, shews that he is the Source of all Light, visible and invisible; of the Light of Nature, as of the Light of Grace.

*Sunday* of the fifth Week, called Passion Week. (John viii. 46, 59.) *Jesus Christ* vindicates his Innocence, against the Calumnies of the *Jews*, and asserts his eternal Generation from his Father, by shewing he was, or rather *is*, before *Abraham*. St. *Gregory* in the Homily, shews that he should be without Sin, since he came for the Justification of Sinners, and the Sanctification of Men.

*Monday* of the same. (John vii. 32, 39.) The Gospel relates the Consults, that the Synagogue and the *Pharisees* held, and the Resolution they had formed, to put *Jesus* to Death; and the Menaces of the Lord, that they would seek him, when they should not find him. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, shews how *Christ* was prepared for his Passion, and for the Glory of his Resurrection.

*Tuesday* of the same. (John vii. 1, 13.) The Gospel relates how *Jesus* would not go publicly to *Jerusalem* to the Feast, but went privately; because the Priests had resolved to put him to Death, and that his Hour was not yet come. Whence St. *Augustine* concludes in the Homily, that he died voluntarily, and when he pleased.

*Wednesday* of the same. (John x. 22, 38.) The Gospel relates how *Jesus* walking in *Solomon's* Portico, the Priests thought to lay Hands on him; but that he passed through the Midst of them unmolested. St. *Augustine* in the Homily  
shews

shews their Treachery, and envious Dispositions.

*Thursday* of the same. (Luke vii. 36, 50.) The Gospel relates the History of *Magdalen's* Conversion. St. *Gregory* in the Homily, proposes her as a Model to all repenting Sinners; and how they should employ the Instruments of their Sin, to the Reparation of their Crimes, as she did.

*Friday* of the same. (John xi. 47, 54.) The Gospel relates another Consult of the Priests and Synagogue, against *Jesus Christ*; and that it was agreed to be expedient that one should die, to save the whole Nation. St. *Augustine* in the Homily, shews, that though they executed their Designs against *Jesus*, yet they did not escape the Evil they apprehended, of being conquered by the *Romans*; and that with the Loss of their Liberty, and of their eternal Inheritance.

*Saturday* of the same. (John xii. 10, 36.) The Gospel relates how the Priests deliberated to put *Lazarus* to Death; because many of the *Jews* followed *Jesus Christ* on his Account. O foolish and vain Thought! says St. *Augustine* in the Homily, as if the same Power, that raised him from a natural Death, could not raise him, though murdered.

*Palm-Sunday* opens the bloody Scene of *Christ's* Suffering, by the Lecture of one of the Passions, that according to St. *Matthew*. (Math. xxvi. &c.) The Gospel of that Day (Matt. xxi. 1, 9.) relates the innocent Triumph some of the Populace had prepared for *Jesus's* Entry into *Jerusalem*, who met him with *Olive Boughs*, and some *Hosannas* of Joy to the Son of *David*.

He came to *Mount-Olivet*, says St. *Ambrose* in the Homily, which is a Figure of his Church, to plant new *Olives* on it, that is, a new People. Each of whom may say, that he is a *Fruit-bearing Olive in the House of the Lord*.

*Monday*

*Monday* in Holy Week. (John xii. 1, 9.) The Gospel relates that six Days before the Passover, that on which the true Paschal Lamb was to be slain, *Jesus* came to *Bethania*, to the House of *Lazarus*, whom he had raised from Death, where a Supper was prepared for him: And that *Mary*, Sister of *Lazarus*, had purchased a Box of precious Ointment, which she poured on his Feet, and perfumed the whole House with the Fragrancy of its Odour. St. *Augustine* in the Homily allegorizes the Fact; and shews how we are to embalm the Feet of *Jesus* by our good Works, and to wipe them with our Hair, by giving our Superfluities to the Poor. For the Poor are the Feet of the Lord, and our Hair is the Superfluity of our Bodies, says this great Doctor.

The rest of the Week's Office is so awful and solemn, that a short Extract of it, such as could be given here, would only disfigure and disgrace it.

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*A succinct Explanation of the Ceremonies is here subjoined, with a Translation of a Letter wrote by the learned Bishop of Meaux, on the Adoration of the Cross, on Good-Friday.*

*The Ceremonies of the Holy Week may be thus briefly explained.*

**T**HE Triangle, on which are placed fifteen Lights, at the Office of *Tenebræ*, may be supposed to signify the blessed Trinity, and that all Light of Grace and Glory comes from it. The three upper Lights may be referred to the holy Family, *Jesus*, *Mary*, and *Joseph*. The twelve others, distributed equally on both Sides, to the twelve Apostles, deriving all Light from their

their divine Teacher. Each Light successively extinguished, one at the End of every Psalm, of the fourteen that are said, shews us how all Light of spiritual Comfort was extinguished for a While in all Hearts, at the Death of *Jesus*. The fifteenth, that signifies *Jesus* himself, is not extinguished, but is hid at the Corner of the Altar, to signify that *Christ's* Light was not entirely extinguished, but eclipsed for a While, by his Burial in the Sepulchre: And the Darkness, after the Extinction of the Lights, signifies the total Darkness, that overspread the Face of the Earth, at the Death of our Saviour.

The Silence, that ensues the Extinction of the Lights, signifies the Horror and Consternation of all Nature at the Crucifixion; and the Noise, or Clapping, alludes to the Cleaving of the Rocks, the Bursting of the Tombs, and the Rending of the Veil of the Temple.

The Adoration of the Cross, on *Good-Friday*, is entirely referred to *Christ* crucified, who is supposed dead thereon; and the Kiss given to the Feet of the Crucifix, that we mean to embrace them as *Mary Magdalen* did, the Day of her Conversion: See the Letter, &c. *Infra*.

The twelve Prophecies read *Holy-Saturday*, before Mass, signify the Instructions that were given the *Catechumens*, who were solemnly baptized on that Day, after the baptismal Font was solemnly blessed. The whole Office of that Morning, from the Mass, was anciently celebrated that Night, and is of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord.

The Paschal Candle signifies the new Light of the Gospel, that *Christ* brought us by his Resurrection. It is lit at the Office until the Ascension, to denote the various Apparitions of our Saviour, during them forty Days.

*Extract of the learned Bishop of Meaux's Letter  
on the Adoration of the Cross.*

**T**O come now to the Matter you would have me treat of, which is *the Adoration of the Cross*, the Difficulty can be but either in the *Thing itself*, or in the *Words*. In the *Thing* there is not any: It is usual to lie prostrate before Kings, Prophets, or an elder Brother, (as *Jacob* before *Esau*) before Angels, or Apostles. (Acts 10. 25.) If they refuse sometimes this Honour, the Saints however continue to pay it; and there is nothing in Scripture better established than this Sort of Worship.

If it be said that it is not usual to fall prostrate before inanimate Things, that is manifestly contradicted by all the Passages in holy Scripture, in which it appears, they fell down before the Ark, as being the Memorial, or Remembrance of God. (*Jos. 7. 6.*) When *Daniel* prayed, he used to turn towards the Place where the Temple had been. (*Dan. 6. 10.*) The Cross of *Jesus Christ* is by much a greater Memorial, it being the glorious Trophy of the most celebrated Victory that ever was obtained. When *Christ* spoke of the Cross, enjoining us to carry it, he comprehended under that Name all the Practice of a penitential Life, or the whole Life of a Christian, which should be a continued Course of Penance. When St. *Paul* declares he will glory but in the Cross of *Christ*, he also included in that Name all the Wonders of the Saviour, of which the Cross is the mysterious Abridgment. At the Sight of so many Wonders, united in the sacred Symbol of the Cross, every Sentiment of Piety and Faith is revived: We are moved and humbled; and that feeling Submission leads us to give all the Demonstrations of it at the Sight of this

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sacred Memorial. We kiss it through Love and Tenderness; and fall down before it with an humble Acknowledgment of the Majesty of our Saviour, whose Glory was united to his Cross.

When in my *Exposition* \* I spoke of inclining, or bowing before the Cross, by that Word I understood all the other Marks of Respect we pay at the Sight of this sacred Signal, which includes the Idea and Representation of all his Wonders. It would be too great a Blindness to suppress in the Presence of the Cross all the Demonstrations of those Sentiments which it suggests to the Heart; and if there be a Reason to express any, we cannot go too far in giving an Assurance of our Respect. Wherefore, as on the one Hand, it is an exceeding Folly to refuse to bow the Head before this precious Monument of the glorious Triumph of *Jesus Christ*, it is no less so, on the other, to be afraid of shewing our Respect by bending the Knee, or by Prostration: Since *Jesus Christ*, to whom these Submissions are made, deserves the greatest we can give.

A properer Day could not be pitched upon, to honour him thus than *Good-Friday*. The whole Ceremony of that-Day tends to give the Faithful a Sense and Feeling of the wonderful Death of *Jesus Christ*. All those Wonders the Church sets forth in the Exhibition of the Cross; and thereby tells us in a short, but expressive Language, what the Saviour has done for us. At one Cast of an Eye we see them all in this Signal: And as this sacred Representative shews us as from *Christ*, all that he has done for our Sakes; so we on our Part, by those simple Acts of Kneeling and Prostration, express what we feel in Return. Whole Volumes could scarce express all that is represented by those Signals: That of the Cross,

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\* The Author alludes to his Exposition of the Catholic Faith, which

which tells us how far we are indebted to our dear Saviour; and that of our Respect and Submission, which shews exteriorly what we feel within.

I have often represented to those who are unhappily blinded with Quibbles, the Honour we give particularly, and in a public Manner, to the Book of the Gospels: Wax Tapers are carried before it: The People rise out of Respect, when it is carried to the Place where it is to be read: It is incensed: We stand up in Token of Joy and Obedience, while it is read: It is given to be kissed: And by all this is signified the Attachment, not to the Ink and Paper, but to the eternal Truths it contains: Nor have I yet found any one so beside himself, as to tax these Practices with Idolatry. I afterwards speak thus to them: What then is the Cross in your Opinion, but an Abridgment of the Gospel? The entire Gospel in one Signal, or by one only Character? Why then should it not be kissed? And if that Honour may be paid it, why not any other, even Genuflexion, or Prostration? *I know but JESUS, and him crucified*, says St. Paul. 1. Cor. 2. There is then all that I know comprized, and perfectly expressed in the Cross, by one Letter: And since all Sentiments of Piety are roused up within me by it, shall it not be allowed me to manifest them outwardly, in Proportion to the Sense I have of them? Certainly, my dear Brother, they must be very blind, who quibble upon all this, one Thing alone is sufficient to confute them; which is, that the exterior Worship is but a Language that expresses the interior Sentiment. If then at the Sight of the Cross, the Feeling I have for the Suffering of *Christ* is awakened within me, why shall I not also at the Sight of it, give all the outward Marks of what I feel? And what is this but to honour the Cross, as it may be ho-

noured ; that is, with Relation to, and in Memory of *Jesus Christ* crucified ?

But of all the external Acts performed in Presence of so holy an Object, the most proper is Genuflexion, or Prostration : For the Cross puts us in Mind of *Christ's* having so greatly *bumbled himself, even to Death, and the Death of the Cross.* What can we do more suitable, to the Commemoration of so profound a Mystery, than to give the most sensible Marks of the profoundest Respect ? And is it not just that *every Knee should bend* at the Signal, as well as at the Name of *Jesus* ; and that not only *each Tongue should confess*, but every Man should avow by the Language of his Actions, that the Lord *Jesus is in the Glory of God, his Father ?* (Phil. 2. 10)

That is, my dear Brother, what we mean in falling prostrate before the Cross. The real Cross that our Saviour was nailed to, or that which we make to preserve the Memory of it, requires the same Respect, since one and the other excite the same Dispositions ; and the Difference is but in the Degrees of more or less ; it being natural for a Man to give greater Marks of Love and Esteem according as he is moved and excited ; or as the Objects that affect his Senses are more adapted to stir up the Remembrance of what he loves.

Protestants count this a superstitious Worship, because it is not commanded : For so unattentive are they, as not to take Notice that the Foundation of this Practice being commanded, those so suitable Marks, we make Use of, not only to express, but to excite such Sentiments, cannot but be commendable, and agreeable to God and Man.

Who has ordered us to celebrate *Easter*, in Memory of the Resurrection ? Or *Whitsuntide*, in Memory of the Descent of the Holy Ghost ? Or the Nativity of our Lord, and the other Festivals of  
*Christ*

*Christ*, and his Saints? There is no Scripture for it. Senseless and carnal Men! who have but the Appearance of Piety, do you give the Name of Superstition to so excellent a Part of the Christian Worship, on Pretence that it is not ordered in Scripture. The Foundation of it is commanded: We are there ordered to commemorate the Mysteries of *Jesus Christ*; and by the same Reason to preserve the Memory of the Virtues of his Servants, as so many Wonders of his Grace, and Examples to excite us to Devotion. The Origin, or Foundation being there ordained, what was more congruous, than to establish certain Days, which of themselves might engage the Faithful to remember those Things?

The Thing itself therefore being so good, those Things instituted to perpetuate and renew the Memory of it, must be equally good. Apply this to the Cross, and to the holy Ceremonies by which we honour it; you will find them equally justifiable, equally good; not only innocent, but the properest Means to refresh the Memory of the all-saving Death of *Jesus Christ*, and the Dispositions it should produce in us. So far as to the Thing itself.

To dispute about the Words, is too poor and mean a Quibble. The Word *adore* in particular, has so extensive a Signification, that it would be ridiculous to condemn it, without having first determined its different Significations. God is *adored*, and in a certain Sense, *he only*. We *adore* Kings, (2 *Kings*, alias 2. *Samuel* ix. 6.) the Footstep of the Lord, that is the Ark, (*Psalms* 98. al. 99. 5.) the Dust under the Feet of the Saints, and their Footsteps. (*Isai.* lx. 14.) *Jacob*, through and with Faith, *adored* the Top of *Joseph's* Rod, as St. *Paul* interprets it in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, xi. 21\*.

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\* This Text is adulterated in the Protestant Bible.---See Annotations on this Text in the Doway and Rhemish Translation.

Those are the Expressions of the Scripture. Whence the holy Fathers have concluded, that the Manger, the Sepulchre, the Cross of our Saviour, and the Nails that pierced him, &c. were to be *adored*: As also the Relicks of the Martyrs, the Drops of their Blood, their Images, and other Things without Life.

Before these Expressions are condemned, the Term of *Adoration* ought to be applied to each Thing according to the Sense and Meaning, to the Nature and Manner, that agrees with it; which the Church does, in distinguishing the supreme from the inferior *Adoration*, and the relative from the absolute, with so much Discernment, that the Adversaries themselves are obliged to acknowledge it. No one is a Stranger to those passages of the Ancients, wherein it is said expressly that the Eucharist should be *adored*. These Gentlemen explain that of a relative *Adoration*; which according to them was paid to it, as being the Representation of *Christ*; in which they are certainly mistaken. Since if this were the Place of producing those Passages, it would evidently appear, they *adored* the Eucharist with that *Adoration*, which is due to *Christ's* own Person. But be that as it may, it is certain that the least *Adoration* they could give it, was the relative; which is therefore incontestible.

According to this Distinction, it should be said, God alone is *adorable*, because he alone is so, in a superior, excellent Manner, peculiar to himself. It is said, he alone is praise-worthy; he alone amiable; alone immortal: Because though his Creatures partakes in some Sense of those Perfections, it is but in him, by him, and with Relation to him. The Matter should be explained, before it is condemned, lest we cavil upon Words.

Thus the Passage of St. *Ambrose*, objected by you, is expounded, and a perfect Solution is given  
to

to all other Passages, that seem to contradict this Doctrine. This great Doctor, speaking of St. *Helena*, Mother of *Constantine* the Great, says, that having found the true Cross, to which *Christ* had been nailed, she *adored* the King and not the Wood. She was certainly in the Right: No Body *adores* the Wood: The Figure is what renders it respectable; not on Account of what it is in itself, but of what it recalls to the Memory. The same St. *Ambrose* has elsewhere said, that in the Persons of Kings, the Cross of *Christ* is *adored*. It is then *adored*; and it is not, in different Respects: It is *adored*; for before it we perform an exterior Act of *Adoration*, in prostrating ourselves: It is not *adored*; for the Intention, and inward Sentiments, in which true Worship consists, are referred to, and terminate in *Christ* himself.

It would be weak and vain to be offended at Things that have so reasonable a Meaning. Certainly it deserves Compassion: And when we see that those Cavils are pushed so far, as to be made a Pretext to break Unity, it strikes us with Horror.

Such Persons as told you that whatever came from the Body of *Christ* should be honoured or *adored*, have not formed just Notions of what they honour.

But that what came out of the Body of our Saviour through his Love for us, and which consequently may serve to make us remember that Love, as the Tears and Blood he shed for our Sins, the Sweats occasioned by his holy and continual Fatigues, that these, and Things of this Nature should be honoured, is what cannot be denied without being insensible to those Marks of his Goodness. If there be extant any Part of that Blood, or those Tears, which the Church has not decided, but tolerates the Traditions of different Churches, we need not search too nicely into the Origin thereof:

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It is but an indifferent Question, that regards not the Fundamentals of Religion. I shall only observe to you, that the Blood and Tears, which are kept, as having come from the Body of our Saviour, are generally but such as are said to have dropt from certain Crucifixes, which some Churches have preserved in Memory of the Miracle. These are pious Opinions, which however the Church gives but for such as they are; and which are not, nor even can be, Objects of Faith.

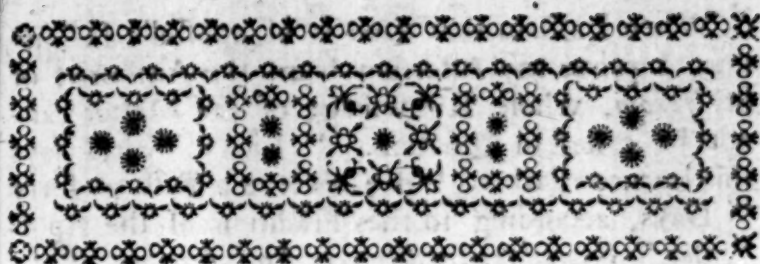
I am glad, my dear Brother, you are to receive this Letter before *Good-Friday*: Not that I suppose you to hesitate upon *adoring* the Cross: You are in too good a School for that: But that in performing that Work, you may do it with greater Feeling, (whilst you behold the whole Mystery of *Christ's* Passion in the Cross alone) and with all Sentiment of Devotion, in the Honour you pay it.

It is there, my dear Brother, you will search for, and acquire the invincible Courage of suffering. It is there you will form a Resolution of carrying your Cross every Day; and the Yoke which our Saviour has laid on you, will become sweet and easy to you. It is there, in fine, you will be inflamed with an unchangeable Love for *Jesus Christ*, who bore your Sins on the Tree of the Cross; who loved you, and gave his Life for you. I am, my dear Brother, and faithful Friend, your's with all my Heart, and without Reserve,

*Benigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux.*

*March 19, 1691.*

*To ARMAND CLIMACUS, Monk of La Trappe,  
newly converted to the Catholic Faith.*



PRACTICAL  
INSTRUCTIONS

ON THE

*Obligation and Manner of keeping Lent.*

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*A Pastor studious to discharge his Duty to his Flock, has compiled the following Instructions from the Authority of many ancient Fathers, and Councils; as also from the Decisions of the celebrated Faculty of Paris; to rescue, if possible, the holy and very ancient Institution of Lent, from the present imperfect Manner of observing it.*

Quest. **WHAT** is the Institution, Antiquity, and Holiness of Lent?

Ans. Lent is undeniably coeval with the Christian Faith. The Proofs that derive its Institution from the very Apostles, are solid and convincing. Any Discipline that has the Stamp of Apostolic Institution, or the Approbation of venerable Antiquity impressed upon it, must be deemed holy. No Article of ecclesiastical Discipline can be more certainly derived from these Sources than the Fast of Lent.

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When I affirm that *Lent* is of apostolic Institution, I prove my Assertion from the Authority of *St. Jerom*, whose Knowledge of the Matter cannot be called in Question. "Every Year," says this learned Father, "we observe a Fast of forty Days, according to the Tradition of the Apostles," *Secundum traditionem Apostolorum*. Ep. 54 ad Marcel.

*St. Augustine* thinks the Fast of *Lent* was instituted in Conformity to the forty Days Fast of *Moses* and *Elias*, in the old, and of *Jesus Christ* in the new Law, to shew, says this holy Doctor, that the Gospel is not contrary to the Law and the Prophets. *Epist.* 53. *Num.* 28.

*Tertullian*, more ancient than either, assures, that the Apostles observed the solemn Fast of *Lent*: He tells us that the Christians of his Time rejected the *Lents* introduced by *Montanus*, and would keep but one instituted by the Apostles. *De jejur.* Cap. 2.

*St. Charles Baromeus*, a zealous Reviver of ecclesiastical Discipline, in his pastoral Edict upon the strict Observance of *Lent*, holds, it was consecrated by the Lord's forty Days Fast, recommended by the Apostles, and ever since constantly observed in the holy Church of God. These Authorities are surely sufficient to prove that it was believed in those early Ages that *Lent* was of Apostolic Institution.

Its Antiquity has also the Sanction of many Councils to support it. The Council of *Laodicea*, which is very ancient, though its Date cannot be precisely fixed, declares *it unlawful to break the Fast of the fifth Day of the last Week*, which is our holy *Thursday*; *but that the whole Lent should be kept*. What gave the Council Occasion to make this Canon, was to reform an Abuse that was beginning to prevail of not keeping holy *Thursday* as of *Lent*. *Can.* 50. *Conc.* *Laod.* The

The first general Council, held at *Nice* (An. 325) at which 318 Bishops assisted, all for the most Part Confessors of the Faith, makes explicit Mention of the Fast of *Lent*: Ordaining that two Councils be held annually in each Province, it requires that one of them be convoked at the Approach of *Lent*; that being a Time, say the Fathers, that Christians are more attentive to purify their Souls, and to make Offerings to God more worthy of his Acceptance. *Conc. Nic. Can. 50.*

I acknowledge that many learned Divines hold that the Canons of this Council are not authentic after the 20th, but others as well read in Antiquity, admit them so to the 50th, and beyond.

The Authority of these Councils may be still supported in this Point by the concurrent Testimony of the holy Fathers. Nothing can be more decisive in Favour of it, than what St. *Epiphanius* and St. *Basil* advance. St. *Epiphanius* says, (*Expos. fid. Cath.*) it is the Practice of the Church to fast forty Days before *Easter*, except on *Sundays*, when it is not usual to fast even in *Lent*. There is not an Isle, nor a Continent, says St. *Basil*, nor a Nation ever so Remote, in which the Fast of *Lent* is not proclaimed and observed. He adds, (*Orat. 4<sup>a</sup>. de jejun.*) that all Countries hear with Alacrity the Publication of this ancient and solemn Institution.

It is superfluous to insist longer on this Truth: These Testimonies prove to Conviction that the Observance of *Lent* is of the earliest Institution, and that it has been in all Ages held venerable in the Church. In what Respect and Esteem ought we then to hold an Institution so holy, so ancient, so expressive of evangelic Self-denials? Far from expressing our Concern at its Approach, as many generally do; should we not chearfully receive the Publication of it, as an efficacious Means to appease  
God's

God's Wrath, to expiate our Sins, and to implore the Mercy of the Lord? We should, no doubt.

*Q What was the Rigour of the ancient Lent?*

*A* It is necessary to give this Question a full Answer, that we may be thoroughly convinced we do but little, in Comparison of what the Christians of foregoing Ages were wont to do. This Retrospect will both humble and excite us: Humble us, at seeing how little we do: Excite us, to do at least that Little chearfully.

There are three Circumstances to be considered in the primitive Fast, the Time and the Quality of the Repast, and the Rigour of the Observances. In these three Articles, it is certain we have fallen greatly short of the Severity of the ancient Discipline; and that our modern Fast is but a meer Shadow of that of the primitive Christians.

In the first Place, let us consider the Hour of their Repast; which it is undoubted was not until after the Hour of Vespers, or about Sun-set: And it was unusual with them to break the Fast, or take the least Nourishment until then. *St. Ambrose* is an authentic Witness of this Truth: A solemn Fast is announced, says this holy Prelate; be careful to observe it: Let not the Love of your Meal entice you to violate it: The End of the Day is not far off. (*St. Ambrose in Psal. 118. Sermon. 8.*)

*St. Jerom* describing the austere Life of some Recluses of his Time, says their whole Life was a continued Fast, but more rigorous in *Lent*. That from *Easter* until *Pentecost*, they abated a little of their Severity, by taking their only Meal at Noon, in Honour of the paschal Joy. *A Pentecoste, Cæna mutantur in prandia, quo & traditioni Ecclesiasticæ Satisfiat, & ventrem non onerent cibo duplicato.* (*Ad Eustoch.*)

Who of us would not suppose himself a strict Faster, in doing what these Recluses did, when they

they did not mean to fast? For they would not think their's a regular Fast, if they took their one Meal even before the usual Hour, that is, before the Setting of the Sun.

St. *Gregory* of *Nysse* complaining of some relaxed Christians of his Time, blames their Impatience at the Length of the Day, to be able to break their Fast at the Setting of the Sun, which they complained to be slower than usual, from their Uneasiness to be at Liberty to take their Meal. (*Orat. in princ. Jej. jun.*)

St. *Basil* complains of another Abuse, that in Fasting strictly Christians did not abstain from Sin: His own Words are more expressive. "You eat no Flesh," says this holy Father, "but you cut your Brother, and wound his good Name: You abstain from Wine; but you do not contain yourself from injurious Words: You wait until Evening to break your Fast; but you pass the whole Day in secular Tribunals, pursuing some contentious Suit against a Brother." (*S. Bas. Orat. 1<sup>a</sup>. de jej.*)

*Theodulpb*, Bishop of *Orleans*, in the 9th Century, relates that the Faithful used to come punctually to the Church at the Hour of Noon to hear Mass, and then Vespers: That afterwards they were allowed to return Home, and to take their Repast. But that such as were unavoidably detained from assisting at the divine Office, were to recite their Complement of Prayers at the proper Hour, and then to eat their Meal or Repast. *Hora Vespertina, completa oratione, jejunium absolvere debet.* Ch. 29.

There is a memorable Passage in the ecclesiastical History, that illustrates this Point of Discipline, and is equally curious and instructive. In the Reign of *Charles* the Great, Emperor of *Gaul* and *Germany*,

many, it is related that he was accustomed to get Mass celebrated, and Vespers sung on the eighth Hour, that is about two o'Clock; after which he sat to Table. A holy Prelate, offended at this Infringement on the ancient Discipline, exclaimed against it, and reproached the Emperor with the Scandal he gave. The pious Monarch, no Way offended at the Bishop's Remonstrance, only requested he would wait until the last of his Household had eat their Meal. *Nibil degustes antequam externi officiales, qui sunt in curia mea, reficiantur.* The Officers of his Palace served each other in their respective Ranks, and sat successively to Table, in their subordinate Degrees; in so much that the last could not eat until near Midnight: *Ita ut ultimi ante noctis medium non Mauducarent*, says the Historian. You see now, Prelate, said the Emperor, it is not Intemperance, but a Consideration for my Household, makes me anticipate the usual Hour of Refreshment in Lent. *Ut puto probasti, Episcopo, quia non intemperantiæ, sed providentiæ Causa, ante vespertinam horam, Convivor in quadragesima.*

The Humility of this great Emperor, his Attention to his Household, the regular Observance of the Fast among them, even those who could not take their Refreshment until so late an Hour, the zealous Bishop's Alarm at the very Surmise of a Breach of the established Discipline, the Emperor's Condescension in accounting so meekly for his Conduct; all these Incidents edify, as much as they inform us of the Rigour wherewith the Fasts were observed by all Ranks of People.

Even so late as St. Bernard's Days, that is the 12th Century, we find this strict Discipline still supported. 'Till now, says this holy Father, speaking to his Monks, 'till this Time we have fasted until  
None,

*None, (to three o'Clock) but now (in this holy Time of Lent) all Orders of People, Kings, Princes, and Peasants, rich and poor, will fast with us until Evening. (S. Bern. Serm. 3<sup>io</sup>. de quadrag.)* So much for the Hour of Repast. How widely different from our relaxed Observance. ?

Now, as to the Unity of the Meal, and the Quality of the Repast, it is no less undeniable, that we have degenerated greatly from the Rigour of the ancient Discipline. The Authorities that have been hitherto recited, prove to Conviction, that a second Meal of any Kind, even the slightest Collation, was not known among these fervent Christians, and that the least Refreshment, besides the one Repast, would be accounted a Breach of the Fast. Even so late as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, *St. Thomas* assures, it was the general Practice, *Est consuetudo populi Christiani*, to eat but once on a Fast-Day. Two Centuries after, *Stephen Poncher*, Bishop of *Paris*, declares it was the Discipline of his Time. *Ecclesiae Moderamine statutum est, ut semel in die a jejunantibus Comedatur.* (Stat. Synod. Anno 1500.)

It is true the Hour of Refreshment was at that Time advanced to Noon; but no second Allowance was yet tolerated by any known Law, or Custom: And more than a Century later, the Faculty of Divinity of *Paris*, determining what constitutes a true Fast, says, *It consists in abstaining from certain Kinds of Food, in eating but once a Day, and in observing the Fast to the Hour prescribed by the Church, Noon at present. (Corpus doct. 1. Part, art. 101.)*

I do not mean herein to censure the present Practice of taking a small Refreshment besides the one Meal: The Church tolerates it: It is therefore allowable. But it is useful we should be informed how remote from the primitive Rigour our modern

modern Fasts are now; and how much we have abated of the ancient Severity.

If we consider now the Quality of our present Foods on the one Meal we are allowed, and compare our Discipline herein with the ancient Rigour, we shall see a great Abatement of ecclesiastical Discipline; and that our modern Fasts scarce deserve that Name, when set in View with the ancient Fast. Butter, Milk, Fish, Eggs, &c. were not then allowed, or at all made Use of in *Lent*. We have St. *Augustine's* Authority, and a great one it is, to prove that Wine, no more than Flesh, was allowed. *Quadragesima, sine vino & Carnibus, non superstitiose, sed divina lege, servatur. Faustus the Manichean, against whom St. Augustine wrote this, abstained from these Things, as being made by the Principle of Evil. The holy Doctor tells him, that it was from no such superstitious Notion, the Church of God enjoined these Abstinences; but in Obedience to the divine Precept of Self-denial and Mortification. (Contra Faust. lib. 3<sup>o</sup>. C. 4.)*

The Allowance of a moderate Drink, to quench their Thirst, was as little known to the primitive Faithful, as a second Meal. We endure both Hunger and Thirst, says a holy Father, in hopes one Day to be admitted to *drink of the Fountain of living Waters.* (S. Greg. Nyss.)

St. *Jerom* exclaims against those who surfeited themselves, even with Vegetables: *Solam abstinentiam Carnium putant, & leguminibus onerant Stomachum.* (S. Hier. ad Furiam.)

St. *Augustine*, pursuant to the Counsel of St. *Paul*, advises conjugal Continence in the holy Time of *Lent*, that the Mind may be more free, and disengaged for holy Prayer. At other Times we exhort you, says this holy Doctor, to avoid all Excess and Intemperance: But now we desire you to fast.

At

At other Times we cry out with Indignation against Adultry, Fornication, and all Kind of Uncleanness: But now we say, contain from the lawful Use of Marriage. (*S. Aug. Serm. 205.*)

In a very ancient Book, attributed to the Apostles, though it be now believed of some other very ancient Author, it is ordained in holy Week to take no other Nourishment, but Bread, Water, Salt and Herbs. (*Const. Apost. Lib. 5. C. 17.*) And *Procopius* relates of the Emperor *Justinian*, that during *Lent*, he used to eat but once in two Days, though he would rise very early, and never go to Bed 'till late. That he neither eat Bread, nor drank Wine. That Herbs, seasoned with Salt and Vinegar, were his only Food, and Water alone his Drink. Here we see imperial Majesty, claiming no Privilege from Dignity and Rank, but observing the Law more rigorously than the meanest of his Subjects.

Are these our modern Fasts? Have they the least Likeness to them? Or can we without Confusion compare the one to the other? At least let the Rigour of the ancient Fast excite us to embrace with Alacrity the present Mode of Fasting, and to observe it with the Exactness that the Church requires.

*Q. How has the Collation been introduced?*

*A.* It has been already observed how the Rigour was gradually abated. One Abatement made way for another. The Hour of Refreshment being brought from Evening to Noon; it was supposed that Nature could not hold out until Noon again without some Refreshment. And thence sprung the Custom of taking a small Allowance at Night, and this was called Collation. It is commonly supposed that the Name, which in the original *Latin* signifies a Conference, is derived from the spiritual Entertainments the Monks and Recluses held

together at Night when they were taking this Refreshment.

The Collation is certainly allowable from the Church's Toleration of it. The Custom now established of taking the Meal at Noon, and the Allowance of a moderate Collation at Night is not to be condemned, without censuring the Indulgence of the Church: But the Collation should be moderate, and considered as a Refreshment to exhausted Nature, rather than a Gratification of the sensual Appetite. Those who most transgress the Rules of Temperance at their Meal, are the very Persons who least observe the Rules of Moderation in their Collation. The holy Fathers have unanimously condemned all Excess, and too great a Delicacy in the Meal. St. *Ambrose* declares, that to seek a Variety of Dishes on Days of Abstinence, is not a Fast in the Eyes of the Lord. St. *Amb. Serm. 33.* St. *Augustine* maintains, it is not Mortification, but Sensuality to seek too much Delicacy on such Days. *-Sunt quidam observatores quadragesimæ delictiosi potius quam religiosi, exquirentes novas suavitates. Serm. 210.* To abstain from Wine, continues this learned Father, and to indulge yourself with a Variety of other delicious Liquors, is not Abstinence, but Intemperance, and Sensuality. *Tanquam non sit quadragesima piæ humilitatis observatio, sed novæ voluptatis occasio. Ibid.* The same holy Doctor, in another Work, calls it a Fast of Intemperance to indulge the Appetite with too great a Quantity of the Food even allowable. *Numquid hæc jejunium Continentiæ est, & non potius luxuriæ deputandum? (In Pl. 43.)* And St. *Jerom* thinks it of no Use to abstain some Days, if the Stomach be palled and surfeited after. *Nibil prodest biduo, triduo vacuum portare ventrem, si postea obruatur, & compensetur Saturitate jejunium.*

*jejunium.* (S. Hier. ad Eustoch.) An ancient Church Historian lays down an unerring Rule for true Fasting: It is to feel Hunger continually. (*Theod. Hist. relig. cap. 3.*)

From these severe Maxims it may be inferred how disfigured our modern Fasts are in the Quantity and Quality of our Foods, and how extremely cautious we should be not to transgress in our Colations, which are a Toleration these holy Authors knew nothing of. St. Charles Baromeus allows but an Ounce and a Half of Bread and a Glass of Wine, at it. (*Acta Eccl. Med.*) And the Faculty of Paris forbids such a Variety or Quantity of the Things allowed, as would give it the Form of a Supper, or a formal Meal. (*Corp. doct. 1<sup>a</sup>. Part, art. 105.*)

*Q. Of what Obligation is the Fast of Lent?*

*A.* So ancient, so solemn a Law must certainly oblige in Conscience, and under Pain of a grievous Offence, that is, of mortal Sin. The holy Doctors and Fathers of Antiquity have all believed and taught it. It is unnecessary to multiply Proofs of this Doctrine. It is the general Belief of all Catholics, that the Violation of so ancient a Discipline must be supposed a Disobedience in a grievous Matter, and consequently a grievous Sin. St. Cyril of Alexandria, threatens with the eternal Pains, those who, in Contempt of the Precept of the Church, and to indulge their sensual Appetite, do not keep the Fast of *Lent*. In one of his paschal Homilies, he asks his Congregation, if they will rather burn eternally, than observe the Fast of *Lent*: He assures them the Alternative is inevitable. A Council held, (Anno 633) excludes those from the paschal Communion, who had eat Flesh in *Lent*; and concerns them to eat no Flesh that whole Year. *Quisquis absque inevitabili necessitate, atque fragilitatis evidenti languore, seu ætatis impossibilitate,*

*fibilitate, dicbus quadragesimæ esum carniū præsumpserit attentare, non solum reus erit resurrectionis Dominicæ, verum etiam alienus ab ejusdem diei Sancta Communione. Et hoc illi cumuletur ad pœnam, ut illius anni tempore, ab omni esu carniū abstineat* 3. (Conc. Tolet. Can. 9.)

By a Law enacted in Charlemagne's Reign, transmitted in the Capitulars enforced in his Name, the Pain of Death is ordained for those, who through criminal Contempt of the Christian Religion, would attempt to use Flesh in *Lent*. *Si quis sanctum quadragesimæ jejunium pro despectu Christianitatis contempserit, & carnem comederit, morte moriatur.* (Capitul. 4. Car. Mag.—Vide Notil. Eccl. Pa. 329.)

An Author relates that a Law in Poland enacted, that the Teeth of such as would eat Flesh in *Lent* should be pulled out: *Abscissis dentibus graviter puniatur.* Some ancient Canons inflict a Penance of two, three, &c. Days, on Bread and Water, on any who should break the Fast, before the lawful Hour. The natural Inference from these grievous Pains, is that a Contempt or Disregard of this universal Law of the Church, was ever accounted a grievous Crime; and that the Laws of the Empire coincided with the spiritual Tribunals, to inflict severe Punishments for it.

*Q. Is it lawful to drink on Fast-Days? Or is drinking a Breach of the Fast?*

*A.* The best Solution to this Question, the Negative of which is the almost universal Maxim of Christians now, is best inferred from the Practice, and Belief of the ancient Fathers, and Canons of the Church. It is undoubted that Antiquity is quite against the relaxed Maxims of modern Casuistry in this, as in many other Points of Discipline. It is not difficult to shew that the Fasts of the Ancients were as strictly kept from all Drink as from

from all Meats, except at the Meal, and that even then a promiscuous Use of Liquors was not allowed. Wine and all spirituous Liquors were as severely prohibited during *Lent*, as the Use of Flesh, and such nutritive Meats; of which some Proofs have been already given.

To prove now that Drink, but at the Meal, was not allowed, let us first inform ourselves from the revealed Word of God, the unerring Source of all Truth, what were the Fasts of the old Law. The Prophet *Jonas* relates that when he preached Destruction or Repentance to the Ninivites; (*Jon.* 3.) the King ordered by Proclamation a severe Fast of three Days, so severe that the very Beasts were not to be led to Pasture, nor suffered to drink Water: *Nec pascantur, & aquam non bibant.* And *Esdra*s assures, he *neither eat Bread, or drank Water, lamenting the Sins of the People.* (1. *Esd.* 10)

The holy Fathers affirm unanimously that a true Fast includes an Abstinence from Meat and Drink. An ancient Author, whose Sermons are annexed to the Works of *St. Ambrose*, says, that Fasting emaciates the Flesh, and that Thirst makes the Visage pale. *Cum abstinentia marcescit caro, & siti pallor obducitur.* (Apud *S. Amb.* Sermon. 37.) *St. Gregory* of *Nyssa* reproves the Immortification of some, who were impatient for *Sunday* to drink at Discretion. (*Orat. in princ. jejun.*) And a little after he adds, *Hunger is bitter, but Heaven is sweet; that is incommodious, but it will be delightful to drink from the Fountain of living Waters, that leave no Thirst.* Ibid.

The Historian *Ruffinus* relates, that a Monk travelling with his Abbot, willing to drink Water to quench his Thirst, the Abbot would not suffer him, because it was a Fast-Day. *Jejunamus, ait, recusato potum.* (Lib. 3<sup>o</sup>.) What is related of a holy Martyr,

tyr, St. *Fruſtuſus*, is edifying : Going to the Scaffold, he was offered a Drink, to revive him : He refused it, as it was a Fast-Day, and the Hour of None was yet to come, when he could break it lawfully.

It cannot be denied that many Authors of Repute have taught that to drink moderately on a Fast-Day, to help Digestion, to recruit the Spirits, to allay Draught, though it does nourish the Body, yet is not a Breach of the Fast : Because Drink is not principally intended for Nourishment. This is St. *Thomas of Aquin's* Doctrine among others. But to pretend under the Sanction of this learned Doctor's Authority, that without Restriction *whatever is Liquid does not break the Fast*, is mistaking his Doctrine hugely, and making him, contrary to his Intention and Meaning, the Promoter of a most dangerous Abuse.

It is the approved Doctrine of many learned Divines, and strict Casuists, that a moderate Drink taken medically, to restore Strength, to quench a violent Thirst, or to refresh the Spirits when they are too low, is not a Breach of Fast. But to extend this Liberty, as modern Fasters do, to Excesses and Intemperance, this is not the Doctrine of St. *Thomas*, nor indeed of any safe Casuist beside. So relaxed a Maxim is so opposite to the Nature and Intent of Fasting, that it cannot be conceived how such a Question could be seriously proposed. The learned Faculty of *Paris* answers it however decisively. *Liquorum potu, extra Coeſtationis horam, quem non neceſſitas provocat, læditur jejunii lex, atque imprimis jejunii finis a lege intentus.* (Corp. doct. 1. par. art. 106.)

Q. *What is to be thought of the Leaves, obtained in Lent, either not to observe the Abſtinence or the Fast? Are theſe Leaves lawful? And on what Terms may they be asked, and made Uſe of?*

A. Very

*A.* Very many ask Leave in *Lent*, not to fast or abstain, who certainly have no sufficient Cause to be dispensed in either. Others, no doubt, have real Reasons to ask and obtain a Dispensation from either, or from both. The last are justifiable; the others reproveable: These will be condemned for violating a Law they could observe: Those excused for not observing a Law that in their Circumstances did not bind them.

The Dispensations obtained in *Lent* are to be considered as those obtained from all other Injunctions of ecclesiastical Discipline. If the Reasons be true and sufficient, or necessary, they are valid and justifiable. A Dispensation is lawful, says a holy Father, when the Cause is just, lawful, or necessary: But if neither requires it, it is not a lawful Dispensation but a cruel Dissipation: *Non placet fidelis dispensatio est, sed crudelis dissipatio.* (St. Bern. Lib. 3<sup>o</sup>. de Consid. ad Eug. 4.)

A Leave then obtained without Cause or Necessity dispenses from nothing; and the Party acting under the Sanction of such a Leave is as guilty as if he neither asked, nor obtained it. He gives less Scandal, it is true: And so far may be less criminal in the Eyes of Men: But his Deceit, in imposing on the Pastors of the Church, criminales him more in the Sight of God, whom he cannot impose upon.

There must be then a true and sufficient Cause of asking and obtaining such a Leave. A real Infirmary of Body, a habitual Indisposition, a too delicate Frame, that could not, without sensible Prejudice or Danger, bear the Hardships of a rigorous Fast, or a strict Abstinence, and many other Reasons, that a judicious and exact Pastor may judge sufficient, are just Causes of asking and obtaining Leave. St. *Augustine* with his usual Moderation says

says so: Observe the Fast as much as you can, without considerable Prejudice of your Body: *Quantum sine læsione corporis tui poteris.* (Ep. 22.)

The Church is not a severe Mother, that would seek the Destruction, but an indulgent one, that wishes the Salvation of her Children: Her Laws, however rigorous, are prudent and accommodated, by the discretionary Power delegated to her Pastors, of dispensing from them on just Occasions, to the Circumstances and Ability of her dutiful Children. No Person is obliged to ruin his Health; nay he would not be excusable if he did, by too rigorous a Fast. St. Gregory the Great strictly prohibited a Bishop, who he was told had prejudiced his Health by fasting, to fast any more. *Districte præcipio ut jejunare minime præsumas.* (Lib. 9. Ep. 28.)

*I caution and conjure you,* says an ancient Father, whose Works are annexed to St. Ambrose's, that none of you will attempt to break the Fast of Lent, unless through Infirmary. (*Apud S. Amb. Serm. 34.*) From which Authority it is inferable, that a real and un-supposed Infirmary is a just and necessary Cause of asking and using this Leave. But the Danger is, that many mistake Sensuality and Delicacy for Infirmary, and solicit Leave from a Reluctance to suffer or endure the Hardship of Fast.

To proceed then safely in so nice a Point, certain Rules are observable. In the first Place you are not to impose upon yourself: You must be conscious that you have a sincere Desire to comply with the Precept, if you could: Then expose your Reasons with Candor, and plead rather against than for yourself; and humbly wait for the Decision of your spiritual Judge. With these Dispositions, it is rare that the Petitioner is mistaken; or if he was, it is to be presumed, that the Searcher of Hearts, who

who sees the Sincerity of his, would mercifully excuse his Error.

Secondly, not to be imposed upon by yourself, you must not be your own Judge: For you may be apt to over-rate your State; or perhaps from too much Severity towards yourself, not suppose your Case as much to be attended to, as it may really be. A skilful and conscientious Physician is the proper Judge in such Cases; to whom you must make a fair Exposal of your Case, and put it to his Conscience not to flatter you: To tell him fairly he must be accountable for your Crime, if through any desired Complaisance he gave you a Decision, that would induce you to seek a Dispensation that your State would not seem to require.

These Precautions taken, there is all Room to suppose the Leave is requisite, and safely obtained: It may then be used without Remorse or Inquietude: It would be wrong to have any, after being so justly dispensed with. But the Evil is, that few use these Precautions: The most Part seek to impose, and to be imposed upon: They apply to some complaisant Physician: They magnify their Ailings to him; and very often have not any, but a chimerical Apprehension of future Ailments. The Fast would incommode them: It may not agree with them to live so long upon certain Foods. Frivolous Excuses! The Church never meant that the *Lent* should not incommode them, but the Reverse: Otherwise it would not be a Time of Mortification. They apprehend it may hurt their Constitution to be deprived so long of the Meats they like: But they never apprehend that their criminal Intemperances, their brutal Excesses, their Surfeits and Revels, ruin more Constitutions, than the most rigorous Fasts ever did, or ever will. It may be confidently assured that fewer Leaves would be ap-

plied for, if imaginary Ailments were less attended to; or a real Desire of attoning for past Excesses seriously formed. Your Complaints will cease, says St. *Augustine*, when your Passions are subdued. *Finiuntur necessitates, cum vincuntur Cupiditates.* (Ep. 220.)

Now as to those who are justly and lawfully dispensed with in the Fast or Abstinence of *Lent*, it is not improper to lay some necessary Rules before them, the Inobservance of which may expose them to abuse the Favour of the Church. Though they be dispensed with from the rigorous Observance of *Lent*, they are not, or cannot, from the divine Obligation of Repentance, which is indispensable. They should then examine seriously, and in the Presence of God, what other Works of Penance they are able to do, and to resolve sincerely to substitute those feasible Works to the others they cannot do, for no Tribunal upon Earth can discharge them from what the Almighty has commanded: *To do Penance.* The Means of doing it, in a Manner proportioned to their Infirmary, are not wanting; but they may be unhappily wanting to the Means. There are many good Works, that no Infirmary can debar them from, and that the most Delicate are capable of: Many Acts of Virtue, that contribute to repair a languid Frame; such as Temperance, Forbearance, Abstinence from the Hurry and Fatigue of the tumultuous Pleasures, and Passions of the World.

St. *Cyril* is very explicit on this very Matter, in his 58th Homily on St. *Matthew*. “If you cannot fast,” says this eloquent Father, “you can at least abstain from dangerous Pleasures: And this Sort of Abstinence is a Virtue, I think not inferior to the other.” God, whose Mercies are infinite, is graciously pleased to accept the

the Practice of Virtues, that are otherwise of Obligation, as a Satisfaction for Sin, when no other can be tendered him. This Self-denial is a sure Way of doing Penance for those, whose Infirmary debars them from any other, and very conducive also to the Recovery of Health: And it is the more necessary as no Infirmary can be a Pretext of not practicing it. Neither does it hinder spiritual Reading, pious Meditations, and the Exercise of Prayer, all peculiarly adapted to the Time of *Lent*. Alms-deeds likewise, and other Works of Mercy, are excellent Suppletives of penitential Fasts. In a Word, the Fast of *Lent* being a penitential Satisfaction, it cannot be dispensed with but on Condition of supplying the Defect of it, by other Works of Penance, suited to the Ability of the Person dispensed with.

Pope *Leo X.* dispensed Cardinal *Ximenes* from the Fast and Abstinence of *Lent*, in Consideration of his Age and Infirmities; but he obliged him to feed three poor Objects from his Table every Day he would use the Leave. An ancient Father, whose Writings are annexed to St. *Augustine's* Works, says, that whoever is exempted from the Fast of *Lent*, should compensate that Defect with the Abundance of his Alms-deeds. St. *Augustine* assures, that Fast without the Works of Mercy is of little avail. (*Serm.* 207.) St. *Leo* the Great teaches the same Doctrine. *Sub sterili fatigatione desudant, nisi eleemosinarum qua possunt erogatione, sanctificant jejunium.* (*De jejun.* 7<sup>m</sup>. *Mensis Serm.* 2<sup>o</sup>.) And adds, that every Deficiency in the one should be supplied by Liberality in the other.

Yet it is not to be inferred that a Person able to fast can be exempted from that Obligation, by an Exchange of Alms-deeds: The Authorities here produced intimate no such Permutation; and the

eighth Council of *Toledo* precludes the least Doubt of it, ordering no such Leave to be given, but where there is an unavoidable Necessity of granting it: *Absque inevitabili necessitate*. The natural Inference of all which is that there may be just and lawful Reasons to demand and obtain an Exemption from the Fast and Abstinence of *Lent*: But that such an Exemption does not, or cannot excuse from other penitential Works, which should be imposed to supply that Defect, and performed with that Intention.

*Q. Are those who are exempted from the Abstinence, exempted also from the Fast, and reciprocally? And a Person exempted in the Beginning, is he obliged to resume what he was exempted from, if the Cause of his first getting Leave ceases?*

*A.* As they are too distinct Precepts, whose Obligation is consequently disjunctive, it is obvious to any Body's Understanding, that an Exemption from the one cannot infer an Exemption from the other. A Person whose Health may be prejudiced by the Fast, or whose Infirmary could not bear it, may feel no Inconvenience from the Abstinence: And *vice versa*, he whose Constitution the Fare of *Lent* may not agree with, may be very well able to do with one Meal and a Collation, such as the Church allows; nor can he without particular Leave or Necessity take more. For Example, many are dispensed from the Fast, in Consideration of their hard Labour; or from the Circumstance of their being Nurses, or Women advanced in their Pregnancy, their being under Age, &c. Will any one suppose they are for them Reasons, exempted from the Law of Abstinence? It would be a ridiculous Supposition. Nor are those, who for the aforesaid Considerations are tolerated to eat more than once in the Day, to suppose they may eat as often as they please.

please. They should make but a moderate and necessary Use of the Indulgence granted them, and strive to come as nigh the general Law, as they can. In like Manner, those, whose State of Health cannot bear the Use of fasting Fare, and who for that Reason are lawfully dispensed with in Point of Abstinence, are yet obliged to keep the Fast on the one Meal, and this Decision holds equally whether the Dispensation be general on Account of public Calamities, or particular for personal Wants.

A Person likewise, whose Infirmary and bad State of Health required an Exemption from either Fast or Abstinence in the Beginning of *Lent*, if before the End his Infirmary ceases, should resume the Obligation. For it is an incontestable Maxim, that when the Cause ceases, the Effect should also cease; which Axiom is particularly applicable to the Case in Point.

*Q. Who are subjected to the Law of Fast and Abstinence?*

*A.* To give a moderate, but safe Decision to this Case, which indulgent Casuists have unguardedly extended to many, who cannot be supposed exempted. Let the Ritual of *Paris* be our Guide. All those who have not attained twenty-one Years compleat, sick People, and Convalescents whose Strength is not yet restored; pregnant Women, and Nurses; Persons whose Age and Caducity will not allow them to fast; Workmen whose hard Labour requires Support: In a Word, all those, whose slender Fare, and poor Food may render the Fast hurtful to their Health. The Ritual declares them all exempted from it. But as for determining the Period of Years, beyond which a Person, though otherwise strong and robust, is not bound to fast, I could never find any approved Author that did it. And the  
Clergy

Clergy of *France*, at their general Convocation of the 1700, have censured the Doctrine of some Casuists, who exempted Travellers and military Officers, from the Obligation of Fasting. (*Comit. Cleri Gall. An. 1700*)

As to the Obligation of Abstinence, I can find no general Exemption from it, but by special Leave obtained for the Reasons before assigned. The Bishops commonly delegate the Power of giving this Leave to the respective Pastors.

*Q. What is the Duty of Masters and Mistresses towards their Domestics, in Regard to the Fast?*

*A.* As they are obliged to watch over their Domestics, and are made accountable by *St. Paul* for their Vices or bad Morals, when occasioned by their Neglect, it is not a Matter of Doubt, but that they are bound to make them observe the Fasts and Abstinenes of the Church, and to allow them proper Food to do so. Wherefore they should not without Necessity impose hard Labour, incompatible with the Fast, on their Servants on such Days, they should allow them their Meal at a reasonable Hour, and exhort them by Word and Example to observe the general Law. It is a wrong Supposition many Heads of Families make, that it is nothing to them, whether their Servants fast, or no; that they are not accountable for their Actions. They certainly are; and it will avail them but little to have fasted strictly themselves, if through their Neglect and Indifference, their Family has not done it. But how guilty are those Masters and Mistresses in the Sight of God, who with or without Leave, using forbidden Meats themselves, order them for their Servants, to save the Expence of other Food? It is too little to say they are guilty of their Transgression; they are the Cauers and Promoters of it.

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I will conclude this Instruction with a beautiful Exhortation of St. *Basil*, from a Work before mentioned. After declaring that there was no Isle or Continent, where the Fast of *Lent* was not proclaimed, he proceeds: " Let no one then  
 " presume to exempt himself from this general  
 " Law; a Law made for all, and addressed to  
 " all. Are you rich? Do not contemn the Fast,  
 " for Fear of incurring his Displeasure, who  
 " made you so, and who in Punishment of your  
 " Disobedience, may reduce you to Poverty.  
 " Are you poor? Do not refuse it; because your  
 " Poverty has rendered it habitual to you, and  
 " obliges you often to fast. Fast is to the Young,  
 " what Rain is to a drougthy Soil, which Water  
 " fecundates. To old Persons it is familiar  
 " from past good Habits. To Women it should  
 " be as easy, as to breath. A Traveller by fasting  
 " becomes more expeditious for his Journey."

He adds, that Fasting gives Youth a Bloom; to Manhood Wisdom, and claims Veneration for old Age. It is an Ornament to Women, a Preservative to Maidens, the Guardian of Virgins, and the Safe-guard of the Marriage-Bed. (*S. Bas. Orat. 2.*)

We need not a greater Commendation of this Law, than what this holy Father gives, nor a greater Incentive to observe it strictly. A great many more Extracts could be made from the Writings of those holy Doctors: But what is here set down will, it is hoped, excite the faithful Children of the Church, to observe it with more Fidelity.

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